

# **Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site Working Group DRAFT Charter**

## **Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary's Advisory Council**

### **Background**

The evidence for ocean acidification in the Pacific Northwest is compelling. A combination of factors renders the Washington coast and coastal estuaries particularly vulnerable to acidified water. One of the most important regional factors contributing to ocean acidification is coastal upwelling, which brings offshore water that is rich in carbon dioxide and low in pH up from the deep ocean and onto the continental shelf. According to a recent assessment of the U.S. communities most vulnerable to ocean acidification, the Pacific Northwest is at high risk of economic harm, where corrosive waters are already negatively affecting Washington's \$270 million shellfish aquaculture industry. Ocean acidification has the potential to seriously threaten the future health of Pacific Northwest's oceans and the significant economic benefits they provide.

Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS) includes 2,408 square nautical miles of marine waters off Washington's rugged Olympic Peninsula coastline. The sanctuary lies at the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and is connected to both the Juan de Fuca Eddy (a.k.a. the Big Eddy) and the California Current Large Marine Ecosystem. This location makes OCNMS an ideal candidate to serve as the core of a sentinel site system for ocean acidification (OA) in the Pacific Northwest, as oceanographic changes can be detected at the coast, prior to entering the Strait and Puget Sound.

A Sanctuary Advisory Council Working Group has been established in responding to:

- increased regional, national, and international concern for potential impacts of ocean acidification to ecosystems and local economies;
- a recognized need, and potential, for collaborative efforts to promote monitoring, research, outreach and public engagement regarding Ocean Acidification;
- the potential benefits of collaboratively investing in the necessary science, identifying management needs, and demonstrating the application of the science to those needs; and
- the September, 2013 Sanctuary Advisory Council resolution in which specific actions of the Washington Blue Ribbon Panel on Ocean Acidification were identified and prioritized for immediate implementation along the outer coast of Washington.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site Working Group (OASeS) is to help develop and plan a workshop to assist OCNMS in becoming a sentinel site for ocean acidification. The OASeS will:

- Plan a workshop with local and regional partners, co-hosted by the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and NOAA's Ocean Acidification Program, to determine the scope and scale of ocean acidification relative to OCNMS, and to develop the scope of work for OCNMS as a Sentinel Site.

- The workshop will focus on current research and monitoring (including Citizen Science), known impacts, documenting current and planned response actions, identifying targeted education and outreach efforts, and the transferability of these concepts to other areas/regions.
- OASeS Working Group will reconvene after the workshop to refine the purpose and task(s) based upon the results of the workshop, looking to identify short- and long-term actions, including those implementable within a year.

### **Mission Statement**

Through an Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site Workshop, the Ocean Acidification Sentinel Site Working Group will determine the scope of work for OCNMS to serve as a Sentinel Site, and redefine the working group's role based upon the outcomes of the workshop.

### **Timeline**

NOAA staff will present to the SAC at the March 2016 AC meeting. It is expected that the working group will require approximately 2-3 60-minute conference calls to plan the workshop, with additional working group meetings to be expected after the workshop. OASeS members will define the timing of meetings and conference calls at their first meeting. The timing of development of a workshop agenda, location, and dates will be determined by NOAA and the AC.

### **Structure**

#### **a. Composition**

The OASeS working group will be comprised of representatives from the AC and NOAA staff from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the NOAA Ocean Acidification Program. Advisory Council membership is comprised of volunteers who self-nominated at the January, 2016 joint IPC-AC meeting – Lee Whitford, George Hart, Jan Newton, Steve Fradkin, Casey Dennehy, and Jennifer Hagen. Additional SAC participants may be identified at a subsequent meeting. NOAA staff will include Mitchell Tartt, Shallin Busch, and Karlyn Langjahr. Kevin Grant will serve as the OCNMS staff lead to this working group.

#### **b. Decision making process**

The OASeS working group will elect a chair or co-chairs at their initial meeting. OASeS will operate under consensus decision making. If consensus cannot be achieved, a vote will be taken and a majority report completed, including explanations provided for differing points of view or minority opinions. The final recommendations from the OASeS working group will be made to the OCNMS AC for consideration, with a goal of forwarding recommendations to the Sanctuary Superintendent.

#### **c. Public involvement**

There is no defined need to solicit public involvement in the OASeS working group.